



# A Qualitative Study Investigating Sports-Focused Research Directives for Chiropractors: A Second Phase Study to Develop A Sports-Focused Research Agenda for Canadian Sports Chiropractors



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## INTRODUCTION

Research agendas identify knowledge gaps, prioritize future research, ensure that research is clinically relevant, and facilitate strategic planning of resources. In the current paradigm of evidence-based practice, where research evidence is paramount to establishing cultural authority within a field, the development of a sports-focused research agenda for chiropractors is imperative.

Our group has developed a three-phase plan to determine consensus on a sports-focused research agenda for Canadian sports chiropractors (Figure 1). This phase II study interviewed sports chiropractic researchers and key opinion leaders in Canada and Internationally to extract a list of research directives to be used as voting items for a phase III Delphi study.



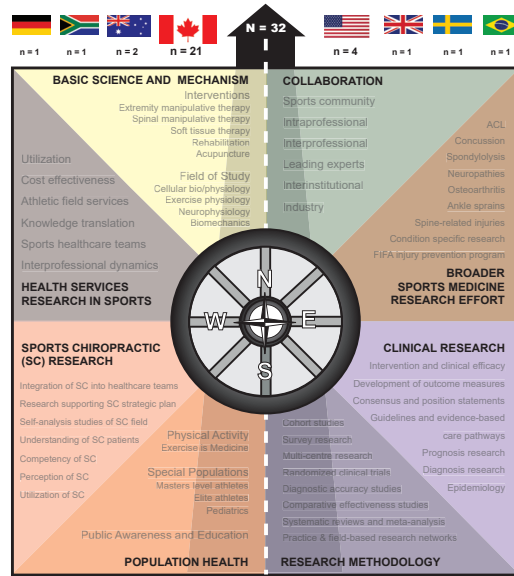
All interviews were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and imported into NVivo™ software (QSR International Pty Ltd., Victoria, Australia) for qualitative analysis. Interview transcripts were sent to participants for their review to improve confirmability of their responses. A qualitative content analysis of the transcripts was conducted using an interpretivist perspective. Two members of the research team coded the transcriptions independently using an inductive content analysis, then met for peer debriefing to discuss coding decisions and abstracted themes from the codes generated.

## RESULTS

Twenty sports chiropractic researchers from eight countries and 12 leaders in the governance of sports chiropractic in Canada were interviewed (N=32) (Table 1). The response rate from those recruited to participate was 89%, and no further codes were identified after analyzing the transcript of the 31<sup>st</sup> participant, where we deemed data saturation to have occurred.

A total of 150 individual research directives (Handout) were extracted from the interview transcripts, and eight major research themes emerged from these directives (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Infographic of the Major Research Themes and Select Research Directives Identified (for a list of all directives identified, please refer to the attached handout)



## METHODS

A qualitative descriptive study was conducted that utilized semi-structured interviews of sports chiropractic investigators from Canada and Internationally, and two focus group interviews of key leaders in the governance of sports chiropractic in Canada. Purposive and snowball sampling were utilized to identify these opinion leaders.

To be included as a sports chiropractic investigator in this study, the participant must have been involved in conducting or supervising sports-focused chiropractic research and must have published at least one sports-focused research paper within the past 10 years.

To be included as a key leader in the governance of sports chiropractic in Canada, the participant must either be a member of the Board of Directors of the Royal College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada) (RCCSS(C)) or the Board of Directors of the Foundation for the RCCSS(C). Participant rights and safety were reviewed and approved by the CMCC Research Ethics Board.

Table 1: Participant Demographic Characteristics (reported as n (%) unless otherwise stated)	
Age in years (mean)	47.38
Male	25 (78%)
Female	7 (22%)
Years of practice (mean)	20.09
<b>Academic positions</b>	
Faculty (adjunct or primary)	23 (72%)
Professor	18 (56%)
Lecturer/Tutor	7 (22%)
University affiliation	13 (41%)
Chiropractic academic institution affiliation	21 (66%)
Journal editor/editorial board	3 (9%)
Board/committee position in a chiropractic association	16 (50%)
Research chair	1 (3%)
Director of a research program	2 (6%)
Director or coordinator of an academic program	5 (16%)
<b>Education</b>	
Undergraduate	22 (69%)
DC	31 (97%)
Masters	18 (56%)
PHD	5 (16%)
PHD (candidate)	6 (19%)
Sports specialization fellowship/diplomate/degree	19 (59%)

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

To the authors' knowledge, this is the first qualitative study that investigated the opinions on research directives amongst sports chiropractic researchers and leaders in the governance of sports chiropractic. This study identified individual sports-focused research directives and major research themes that can be utilized as voting items for a phase III Delphi study that will determine consensus on a sports-focused research agenda for Canadian chiropractors.